

# MADISON COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2008

by Steve DiGiovanna Communications / DES2

"the pessimist complains about the wind, the optimist expects it to change, the realist adjusts the sails"

**Moving it out:** Bridger Communications Technicians work in the Madison County Communication Center removing the Motorola Console that has been a staple of the dispatch office for nearly 20 years. The old console is being removed because parts for repairs are difficult to find and the console alone took up about 20% of the total floor space of the office. The facility is in the process of a mild renovation to improve the comfort and work space environment for dispatchers and communication efficiency.



## Communication Center Changes

The Madison County Communication Center is currently undergoing a bit of a modernization effort. The goal is to improve work space counter areas, enhance dispatcher workstation comfort, modernize the second dispatch station, increase work station standardization - and put into service a supervisor station complete with 911 phone capabilities.

In essence, the upcoming changes will ultimately give the Communication Center, 2 radio communication stations and 3 call-taking stations.

Eventually, Madison County will need more than one regularly scheduled 911 operator on duty. We have already had significant incidents where there was a need for 3 dispatchers to adequately manage acute communication needs.

Though the remodel does nothing to increase Communication Center survivability in the event of a major seismic event near Virginia City, they are changes that need to be made while larger / future plans are being considered.

With the seemingly endless discussions over the direction of the future Law and Justice facility, concerns about the economy - and the need to modernize some of our communication equipment, now is the time to make some much needed improvements to stay functional and be able to handle our current communication workload.

Recently, the UHF radio that provides the link for the county repeater system was replaced to allow for more reliability and a degree of backup redundancy. A microwave for dispatcher convenience, a Stancil recorder for documenting radio and telephone conversations and television for access to the Weather Channel and local and national news are a few of the new additions made to the office. A second "C Soft" radio console has been ordered as well.

The changes being made now should help improve our communication reliability, equipment reparability and overall effectiveness for the immediate future.

I am writing this letter to tell you of my temporary misfortune and how those in the community of Ennis went above and beyond to help my family and me.

On October 10, 2008, my family and I were on vacation from California and driving to Bozeman in our truck, pulling our 5<sup>th</sup> wheel trailer. It was dark and I stopped on the Norris grade with several “18 wheelers” in order to put chains on. Each time a vehicle approached, I would stop putting on the chains and my wife and I would stand behind the safety of the guard rail until the vehicle slid past.

During one of my trips to get behind the guard rail, I fell in the road and broke my ankle. I was unable to walk. I could feel myself going into shock. I feared for the safety of my family and called 911 for help.

I spoke with Madison County Communications Dispatcher Lynda Holt and told her what had happened. With her professional, caring and reassuring demeanor, she helped keep me focused and calm. Dispatcher Holt told me that she was sending help.

After a short while, Montana State Trooper Tammy Perkins arrived. Trooper Perkins assessed my injuries and rendered first aid. She too was kind, caring and professional. She stayed with us and monitored my condition until the road was plowed and the ambulance could arrive.

EMT’s Barbara and Brad Bradshaw from Ennis Ambulance arrived and tended to my injuries and prepared me for transport. They were both compassionate and professional. They also boarded my daughter, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter onto the ambulance. My wife remained behind with Trooper Perkins and our truck and trailer.

A third EMT named Donna drove us to Madison Valley Hospital. Once at the hospital, Donna found out that my family was hungry and had not eaten for several hours. Donna drove my daughter down to the local 24 hour convenience store/gas station. There she got all my family hot food and brought it back to the hospital.

In the Emergency Room at the hospital, Doctor Ben Lindeman, Nurse Mueller, and an assortment of other E.R. staff tended to my injuries. Dr. Lindeman was definitely in charge, but he recognized the importance of the team effort in my overall treatment. I was impressed with my treatment.

My wife later told me that when Ron’s Towing arrived, both Ron Imberi and Ron’s wife, Mickie Imberi, were involved in getting my rig off the hill. Mickie was unbelievably sweet during this trip and she told my wife everything that she was doing during the drive in the snow, so my wife could learn should she need to drive at a later time.

Dr. Lindeman coordinated to have my truck and trailer put in the parking lot at the hospital so my family could be in the comfort of our trailer while I was being treated. Trooper Perkins arrived at the hospital to check on me, to see how I was doing, and to see if there was anything else she could do for my family and me. EMT Brad Bradshaw gave me his personal phone number and told me to call him in the morning so he could help me with anything I might need.

Dr. Lindeman suggested I stay at the Fan Mountain Inn across the street from the hospital. We could wait out the weather and plan our best course of action to get back to California to have the surgery necessary to take care of my ankle.

I phoned Fan Mountain Inn and spoke with Joel (I believe he is the owner). We checked into the motel and found that the staff was quite helpful and the inn was clean and comforting.

The next day, I spoke with Joel at the Fan Mountain Inn to find out where my wife might be able to rent a car in town so she could drive some of my family to the airport. Joel suggested I call Noack Auto Sales in Ennis as they sometimes rent cars. I called and spoke with Ron who I also believe is the owner of Noack Auto Sales. When Ron found out that I was the man who broke my ankle a few nights earlier, he said there was no need to rent a car. He told us that he and his wife would gladly drive my daughter in law and granddaughter to the airport. They took them to the airport the following day.

Although breaking my ankle might be considered unfortunate by some, I am actually looking at this entire event as a blessing in disguise. We met many wonderful people in the community of Ennis and their willingness to open their arms and hearts to us, to someone who they did not know, has helped restore my faith in people (Remember, I am from Southern California). It was not just one person who was willing to help, but virtually everyone we met.

Ennis is a wonderful place on this earth, and it is a place where people are good, kind, and caring.

I can’t thank all of you enough.

Scott A. Baeckel

NOTE: This is a condensed version of the original letter. Scott is a Deputy Sheriff for a large law enforcement agency in Southern California. You can view the original letter at [madison.homestead.com](http://madison.homestead.com) – the Madison County Emergency Web-Site.